

MHawaii MARINE

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THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD WINNING METRO FORMAT NEWSPAPER

MAY 25, 2007



Ugly Angels
A-3



Concert
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Run
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Impatience with progress troubles commandant



R.D. Ward

General James T. Conway, commandant, makes a point during a May 17 media roundtable at the Pentagon. The general answered reporters' questions on a broad range of Corps issues and programs.

Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Many Marines are concerned that Americans aren't willing to invest enough time for success in Iraq, the Corps' top officer said at the Pentagon May 17.

Commandant Gen. James T. Conway told Pentagon reporters that defense officials must do a better job of communicating to the American people the cost of leaving Iraq too soon.

While Americans disagree on the reasons for going into Iraq, there is much more agreement on what would happen if coalition forces left before achieving success, Conway said.

Americans have to understand that defeating an insurgency is a long-term proposition, he said.

"Historically, (defeating insurgents) has (taken) somewhere between nine and 10 years, with various levels of effort," he said. "I think that there is less of an appetite in our country than we the military might think we need to sustain that kind of effort over that period of time."

The general said coalition forces in Iraq see incremental daily progress. "They want to be able to sustain that progress, because they want to be able to succeed and come out with our credibility high and the credibility of the United States ... where it was when we went in," he said. "So in that context, I think that our servicemen and women would wish for as much time as it takes to do the job, realizing that incremental progress will one day

See **PROGRESS**, A-2



Christine Cabalo

Captain Matthew Tracy (left), company commander, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, stands with 1st Sgt. Darryl Atkins, Echo Company, 2/3, and the guidon outside the company's headquarters aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

K-Bay ground commander earns trophy

Christine Cabalo

Photojournalist

Captain Matthew Tracy rebuffs his worthiness as the newest recipient of the Leftwich Trophy for Outstanding Leadership announced April 26 in All Marine Message 024/07.

First presented in 1979, the trophy is awarded to a Marine ground commander who served with the Fleet Marine Force. Tracy said many past recipients were captains who were the greatest men he's ever met.

"I idolized them as a young lieutenant," said Tracy, commander, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. "They had such magnetic personalities. They were charismatic, articulate and well spoken. All of them were masters of the tradecraft."

Tracy currently commands more than 170 Marines aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Never expecting to be considered among such leaders, the captain said winning the trophy has been a humbling experience for him.

The 32-year-old native of Hartford, Conn., is one of six ground commanders who were nominated for the award.

Being a Marine is a specialized profession, and he said it's just like being a lawyer or a painter. The Echo Company commander said the leaders he admires are ones who can balance the "art and science of the Corps."

He said Marines are taught the technical aspects of the profession very well. It's up to the individual Marine to build up skills for good decision-making and effective communication.

His Marines credit the captain's vigilance during their recent Iraq deployment as part of what makes him a top company commander.

"He's the Energizer Bunny," said Gunnery Sgt. James Berger, company gunnery sergeant, Echo Company, 2/3. "The captain really kept going, going and going – just like the commercial. He set the standard, and he got everyone riled up."

While deployed, Tracy had a picture of an infamous regional leader of Al Qaeda on the wall of his living quarters.

"I had his picture directly opposite my bed," he said. "When I went to my bed, I looked at it. When I worked on my computer, I looked at it. When I went to sleep, I looked at it. The Iraqi police would come in and spit on it. They'd ask why I had this picture in my small sanctuary. I told them it helps me keep my priorities straight. When I feel tired or hungry or if I want to quit, I think about this guy first."

One of his main priorities was implementing new strategies against Al Qaeda-in-Iraq forces quickly adapting to regular military tactics.

"They couldn't figure out what we were doing because the captain anticipated them," said 1st Sgt. Darryl Atkins, company first sergeant. "He had us change up how we did things all the time to keep the enemy off balance. He made them react to us."

Described as a go-getter by Atkins and Berger, both said the captain's attentiveness to his job was apparent upon meeting him. Berger said he remembered the captain asking him to remove the company commander's office chair and replace it with a lectern Tracy could stand behind. The captain's desk and chair is still inside his office only at their request.

"He's the epitome of everything the award stands for," said Berger. "I'm not surprised he won. He's a top company commander who always puts himself out there."

Marines gain confidence, camaraderie through training

Pfc. Ethan Hoaldrige

U.S. Marine Forces, Pacific

Leaping over seven-foot walls, climbing 20-foot ropes and swimming hundreds of meters in the ocean were all part of a day's work for U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific service members May 16.

Marines from MarForPac ran the traditional Marine Corps obstacle course and then moved to the beach for more "fun" in the sun as a part of their battalion physical training.

"We were able to get some good physical training, but it was great for building camaraderie among the Marines as well," said Sgt. Alex Velazquez, MarForPac training noncommissioned officer. "We'll definitely try and schedule more events like this in the future, when the rest of the command returns from Thailand."

The Marines were challenged physically and mentally during the training, because it required technique and teamwork.

"It was a great confidence builder to finish the O-Course," said Pfc. Patrick Bennett, MarForPac postal administration clerk. "The calisthenics in the ocean were tough, and the spirit of competition made it fun. I definitely want to do this again."

Marines at MarForPac don't always get to leave the office and participate in events like this, because of mission requirements.

"We know it can be hard to release the Marines from their daily responsibilities at work," said Velazquez. "But it's worth it, because the camaraderie that forms and the physical challenges they overcome build their confidence and they become better Marines for it."



Pfc. Ethan Hoaldrige

Private First Class Patrick Bennett, postal administration clerk, U.S. Marine Forces, Pacific, climbs the rope at the end of the obstacle course for his second time May 16. MarForPac held a battalion wide physical training day to help build confidence and camaraderie amongst the Marines.

News Briefs

Post Office Closure for Holiday Observance

The Marine Corps Base Hawaii Post Office will be closed Saturday through Monday, in observance of Memorial Day and will reopen at 8 a.m. on Tuesday. The Post Offices in Kailua and Kaneohe will be open for Saturday service.

If you have questions, please call the Base Post Office at 257-2008.

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Luncheon

A luncheon in honor of Asian/Pacific American Heritage month will be held Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. in the Anderson Hall Dining Facility. The guest speaker will be Army Maj. Gen. Vern T. Miyagi, mobilization assistant to the commander, U.S. Pacific Command.

Clinic Central Appointment Number Changing

In an effort to streamline services and provide greater access to care for beneficiaries of Makalapa and Kaneohe Bay Branch Health Clinics, there will be one combined central appointment line. Medical appointments for either clinic can be scheduled by dialing 473-0247 between 6 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Weekend same-day appointments are available at either Makalapa or Kaneohe Bay Branch Health Clinics by calling 473-0247 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturdays and between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Sundays.

Naval Health Clinic Hawaii does have an After-hours Provider Advice Line that enables beneficiaries to speak with a medical provider anytime the clinics are closed. This service is accessed simply by calling the above central appointment phone number and there is an option to speak with an answering service who will contact an after-hours provider. The provider will return a beneficiary's call within the hour.

Increased Air Noise

Residents may notice an increase to noise levels at Marine Corps Air Facility now through June 4 due to annual training from the Marine Corps Reserves.

Weekly Legal Brief

A new weekly brief to aid Marines, Sailors and civilian personnel on Wills and Powers of Attorney will be held at the Legal Services Center, Legal Assistance Office, every Wednesday at 10 a.m. Also included are some important tips on wills and powers of attorney.

Recruiter Assistants Needed

The Marine Corps Recruiting Station in Harrisburg, Pa. is looking for motivated Marines to serve as recruiter assistants. RS Harrisburg covers the following counties in Pennsylvania: Fulton, Franklin, Perry, Cumberland, Adams, York, Dauphin, Lebanon, Lancaster, Chester, Berks, Schuylkill, Wyoming, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wayne, Pike, Monroe, Northampton, Carbon, Lehigh, Bucks, Montgomery, Philadelphia and Delaware.

For more information about the recruiter assistance program in your hometown area, contact Staff Sergeant Christopher Cunningham at (717) 770-6637.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700
DEERS	257-2077

Hawaii MARINE

www.mcbh.usmc.mil

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Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland

Jeremy Pederson, scuba diver trainer and master diver, Ocean Concepts, helps Amanda Verhoff, 9, with her snorkel and mask while Randii Cavanaugh, 10, and her brother Brian, 11, prepare their masks during “Operation Homefront” Pool Party at the Base Pool Saturday.

‘Operation Homefront’ makes big splash

Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland

Editor

More than 85 people gathered at the Base Pool Saturday for “Operation Homefront’s” Pool Party.

Mostly women and children, the patrons at the event represented the families of deployed service members stationed aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

“(Marine Corps Community Services) is providing support for ‘Operation Homefront’ to support deployed Marines’ and

Sailors’ families,” said Master Sgt. Saturnino Velazquez, director, Marine Corps Family Team Building.

The Pool Party was the second of a series of monthly events to take place throughout the year.

“These events will help (the families) participate in family weekend events, which hopefully provide strength and security for the children,” said Velazquez. “The events will assist in passing time and will also help in making sure families spend quality time with their family and friends from the unit.”

The family members in attendance seemed to be enjoying their time at the pool.

“This program is great,” said Sherry Cavanaugh. “The events add to activities for us to do during the deployment. I’m always trying to find things for us to do to keep busy.”

During the three-hour event, children participated in relay races, pick-a-duck fishing game, scuba classes and other activities in the pool.

The beginning scuba class seemed to be a big hit. Chaplain (Cmdr.) Gary Carr, officer-in-charge, CREDO, and several

other volunteers from Ocean Concepts gave classes and personal instruction on how to dive.

“We are giving the children a chance to learn scuba diving and discover a whole new world,” said Carr.

The next scheduled event for “Operation Homefront” is the Beach Bash held at the Cabanas located near Hale Koa Beach here. Deployed family members interested in attending should get their tickets from either their command, or by calling Marine Corps Family Team Building at 257-2087.

PROGRESS, from A-1

take us over the top.”

Conway, who has been commandant for about six months, said he is encouraged by coalition progress in Iraq’s Anbar province.

“What we are seeing transpire in the Al Anbar province today is a clear, discernible wedge between the Sunni tribes and the Al Qaeda in Iraq,” he said. “It has taken four years for these folks to realize that the Al Qaeda in Iraq could offer no more than a future filled with fear and instability.”

Tribal leaders and sheikhs in the Sunni province have thrown their lots in with the Iraqi government.

“Some very brave people have stepped up to speak out against Al Qaeda and encourage their

fellow tribesmen to work together toward an Iraq that is stable and at peace with its neighbors,” Conway said. “Now more than ever, it’s imperative for the power of the (United States) to continue to support the people of Iraq economically, politically and militarily.”

Progress in Al Anbar province has been so great that it has changed strategy in the region, Conway said. At one point, U.S. and Iraqi officials viewed the situation in Anbar province as bleak and forecast that it would be the last province to transition to Iraqi provincial control.

“That has changed,” Conway said. “We now have Sunnis in large numbers joining the Iraqi army in the al Anbar province. We have more Sunni tribesmen wanting to become police than we have the opportunity to

train on a monthly basis.”

As part of the military surge to quell violence, two battalions are scheduled to go to the province.

“Any plus-up effort ... (is) in a very real sense reinforcing success,” Conway said.

The situation is so much better that the additional battalions may be shifted to other areas in the country, Conway said, adding that much of the province could fall under the control of the Iraqi police and army.

Conway said he is pleased with moves to rush procurement of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, which are more effective than up-armored humvees at withstanding the deadly effects of roadside bombs. “These vehicles will truly have a positive impact on our ability to

better protect our Marines and sailors operating at the tip of the spear,” the commandant said.

Conway also reported on efforts to increase the size of the Marine Corps to 202,000 personnel through 2011. Recruiters are doing a superb job in a constrained environment, Conway said. He noted that growing casualty lists have made it tougher for recruiters to convince “influencers” -- parents, coaches, teachers etc. -- to encourage qualified young Americans to consider the military.

Surveys show that the propensity for all major ethnic groups in the United States to join the all-volunteer military is down. Still, Conway has tasked recruiters with ensuring that the Marine Corps reflect the ethnic diversity of America, he said.

Patrol Squadron 9 Change of Command



RONDEAU



WYATT

Commander Aaron Rondeau relieved Cmdr. James Wyatt as commanding officer of Patrol Squadron 9 in Hangar 104 aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, during a ceremony May 18. Wyatt took command in May 2006. Rondeau was the executive officer of VP-9 prior to this tour and will lead the squadron through an Inter-Deployment Readiness Cycle preparing crews for detachments all over the world.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Isolated showers after 10 a.m. Partly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind around 13 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Night — Isolated showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 71. East wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

High — 82

Low — 71

Saturday



Day — Isolated showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind around 13 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Night — A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 72. East wind around 10 mph.

High — 82

Low — 72

Sunday



Day — A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind around 13 mph.

Night — A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 72. East wind around 10 mph.

High — 82

Low — 72

Ugly Angels: 55-years-old, still turning



Lieutenant Col. Brian W. Cavanaugh, commanding officer, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362, speaks to the Marines and special guests of the squadron about the “Ugly Angels” history during their 55th birthday celebration April 30 in Al Asad, Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Jaime Cortez, maintenance administration chief and aerial observer, HMH-362, looks for any suspicious activity or enemy threat during a flight April 30. The AO serves as another pair of eyes and hands for the crew chief.

Story and Photos by Sgt. Anthony Guas

2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (FWD)

AL ASAD, Iraq — History is about being the first at something. Lewis and Clark were first at completing a United States overland expedition to the Pacific coast and back, the Wright brothers were the first in flight, and the Marine Corps is known as the first to fight.

Although the Marine Corps as a whole holds an illustrious history, individual units also have their own stories. The “Ugly Angels” of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362, who have their fair share of firsts, recently celebrated their squadron’s history, April 30.

“It’s our 55th year of excellence,” said Lt. Col. Brian W. Cavanaugh, the HMH-362 commanding officer. “This squadron has seen combat in Vietnam and Desert Storm, and has participated in other operations such as Haiti.”

The Ugly Angels were the first squadron to receive a CH-53D in 1969. Later, they held the distinction of having served as the first Marine aircraft unit in Vietnam. In March of 2002, HMH-362 opened a new chapter when it became the first CH-53D squadron from Marine Aircraft Group 24 assigned to the Marine Corps’ Unit Deployment Program at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

“I have been blessed. It’s an honor and a privilege,” said Cavanaugh about serving as the Ugly Angels commanding officer. “To command (a squadron) is an honor and when I selected for this squadron I was floored. I served with the Ugly Angels as the maintenance officer before. (The squadron) is better (now), the foundation was laid in the late 90s and it holds sharp still today. It’s good to know that the hard work put in over the 55 years is holding strong.”

The Ugly Angels, who are based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, are currently serving a seven-month deployment here.

“We are pretty much cargo and troop transport,” said Sgt. Joshua Groh, crew chief and mechanic for HMH-362. “Pilots fly the plane, crew chiefs are in charge of the back. We work with the aerial observer to load packs and cargo and move everything from point A to point B.”

From the maintenance control to the crew chiefs, everyone in the squadron is putting in their part to accomplish the mission.

“Operations are going smoothly; everybody is working hard, training hard,” said

Cavanaugh. “We are prepared mentally and physically.”

Safety is an important aspect in the Marine Corps, and for the Ugly Angels that is the number one priority.

“Safety is always the first mission,” said Staff Sgt. Jaime Cortez, maintenance administration staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge. “We have the second oldest aircraft in the Marine Corps and some have a lot of flight hours. We take all that into consideration, so we make sure that we dot the I’s and cross the T’s.”

One of the biggest factors that make the squadron so successful is their dedication to their work.

“These Marines bust their butts,” said Sgt. Maj. Alphonso Mack, HMH-362 sergeant major. “What I like about the Marines in this squadron is that on the ground side you sound liberty call and they are gone; here you sound liberty call they are not leaving until that bird is up. Their whole thing is that the bird might have to go in and save somebody’s life.

“That is the most amazing thing that I have ever seen.”

Although the Ugly Angels of past left some pretty big boots to fill, Cavanaugh believes his Marines are strapping them on and running with them, said Mack.

“(The Marines) are holding up strong,” said Cavanaugh. “We get e-mails from Vietnam era crew chiefs congratulating them. The Marines are working hard serving their country honorably.”

The knowledge that their job can directly affect one of their fellow Marines is motivation for the Ugly Angels.

“I think these guys know what is expected of them, because I didn’t let them forget,” explained Mack. “I didn’t want them to come out here with blinders on because they heard that Al Asad (was easy). Luckily, I have been (in Iraq) before and I was able to share with them my experiences and that those Marines out there need and depend on them. It has made them realize their mission and if something is wrong on one of the birds they are on it quick.”

The performance of the Ugly Angels so far has been nothing short of outstanding and serves as an indicator for the rest of the deployment, according to Cavanaugh.

“I think this deployment will go smoothly,” said Cavanaugh. “We are going to refine the process, try to make things run more efficient. Try to make things better and create a better product.”



Sergeant Joshua Groh, crew chief and mechanic for HMH-362, tries to repair an M2 .50 Caliber Heavy Machine Gun during a flight April 30.



Two CH-53Ds from HMH-362 prepare to take-off after refueling aboard Al Asad, Iraq. The helicopters were returning from testing the on-board M2 .50 Caliber Heavy Machine Guns at a local firing range.



First grade students quietly watch a slide presentation.



Taking a moment to meet the students, Chief Warrant Officer Jay Brewer, officer-in-charge, Meterology and Oceanography, Marine Corps Air Facility, speaks to first graders before a METOC brief May 17. The brief covered hurricanes, tornadoes and other inclement weather.

Mokapu students get glimpse of how hurricanes, tornadoes, rip tides work

**Story and Photos by
Sgt. Sara A. Carter**
Community Relations Chief

Students from Mokapu Elementary received a taste of Marine Corps Meteorology and learned about unsafe weather during a brief at the school May 17.

The brief, which touched on hurricanes, tornadoes, rip tides and other types of dangerous weather, was given to the students as part of hurricane preparedness month.

“It’s good to give these briefs,” said Chief Warrant Officer Jay Brewer, officer-in-charge, Meteorology and Oceanography, Marine Corps Air Facility. “It gets the kids thinking in advance about these things.”

Brewer believes all of the students, even the kindergarteners, received valuable information from the brief.

He hopes they talk to their

parents about what they learned and in turn their parents will start to plan for possible inclement weather.

During the brief the children chuckled as they watched a video of men walking against strong winds and yelled “whoa” as they looked at pictures of the damage hurricanes and tornadoes can do.

Presenter Cpl. Kyle Ash, weather observer, METOC, used the analogy of how a cookie gets soggy in a glass of milk to help the children understand how mud- and land-slides happen.

“I think the students were receptive to our brief,” said Lance Cpl. Omar Caraballo Pietri, weather observer, METOC, who also helped give the brief. “They are now aware of what to do when one comes.”

Most of the children enjoyed the brief.

“It was good because it taught us a lot of stuff about hurricanes so we can be safe,” said 6-year-old Mya Baroln.

It was apparent the brief stimulated the minds of the children when they were given time to ask questions.

Questions like “Can a hurricane knock down the tallest building in the world?” and “How big can a hurricane grow-up to be?” were just two of the many unique questions the children asked.

“(The teachers) don’t teach about hurricanes or weather much in school,” said Ash. “But kids know what (hurricanes) are so this brief catches their interest.”

For Brewer and his Marines the purpose of this event was two-fold. They hope their brief sparked the student’s interest not only in weather, but also in science.



First graders Rene Baez (left) and Mya Baroln say “Whoa” as they look at pictures of the destruction made by a hurricane.

June is Hurricane Awareness Month for the state of Hawaii. Individuals on base are encouraged to prepare for the unpredictable hurricane season, which lasts from June 1 through Nov. 30.

“A lot of people probably don’t even know a hurricane can hit Hawaii,” Brewer said. “It’s important that everyone is prepared.”

AROUND THE CORPS

Al Qaim medical facility receives upgrade

Cpl. Andrew Kalwitz
2nd Marine Logistics Group

AL QAIM, Iraq — The Health Service Support Element of Detachment 2, Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), upgraded its capabilities to support the increased operational tempo of 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment.

Eight Sailors of the Forward Resuscitative Surgical Suite from Al Taqaddum, Iraq, enabled the upgrade by bringing the necessary equipment and expertise to temporarily provide surgical capabilities.

“Normally, we don’t have a surgeon around and if a patient needs surgery, we have to medically evacuate them,” said Seamen Gabriel D. Florez, a hospital nurse with the HSSE.

The FRSS arrived here May 12 and has already had an effect on the HSSE.

During one of the facility’s bi-weekly mass casualty drills May 14, the presence of the FRSS enabled the treatment of patients rather than enacting a rush to fly them to Al Asad for surgery.

“The time it takes to fly from here to Al Asad is anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour,” said Lt. Cmdr. Angela S. Earley, a trauma surgeon from Al Taqaddum Surgical Detachment. “That could be the difference between life and death.”

Earley, a Xenia, Ohio, native and other members of the FRSS have had an opportunity to trade advice and share experiences with the 18 service members at the HSSE. She said she hopes both teams continue to learn from each other until the FRSS returns to Al Taqaddum.

“I wish we could keep them here longer,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Candee Bost, a hospital corpsman with the HSSE and a Statesville, N.C., native. “They give great feedback. It’s

better for us to hear what the OR’s side of the house has to say.”

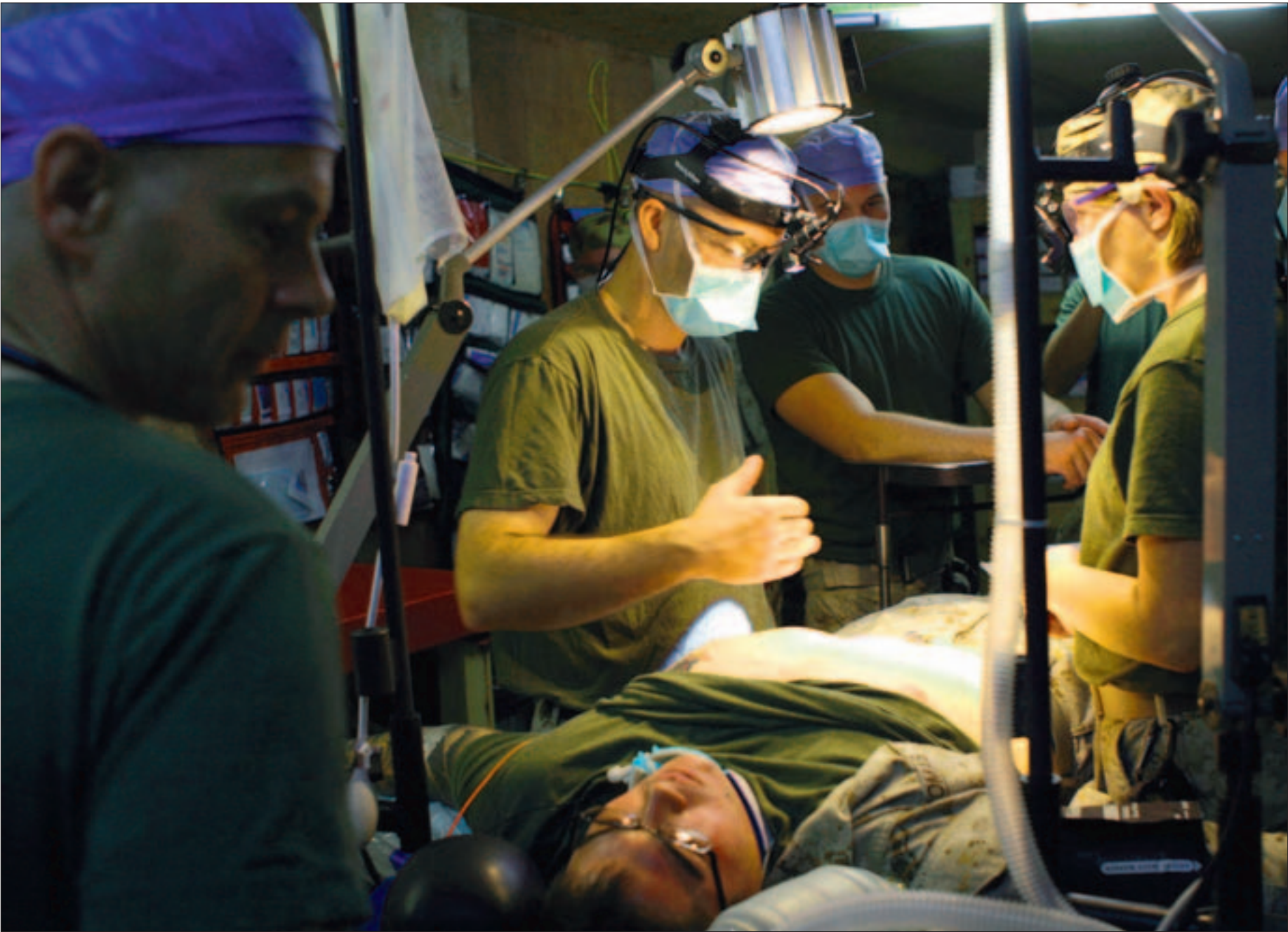
Chief Petty Officer Mary D. Weiss-Brandenburg, a hospital corpsman and the senior enlisted leader with the HSSE, agreed with Bost and went on to explain the significance of understanding things from a surgeon’s point-of-view.

“We try to anticipate what the surgeons are going to be looking for when they’re flown to a higher level medical facility,” said the St. Paul, Minn., native.

Weiss-Brandenburg said this will be important to learn before the HSSE no longer has the FRSS and their surgical capabilities.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Robert M. Beal, an advanced laboratory technician with the HSSE and a Harrisburgh, Ill., native said he is certain the capabilities will be beneficial while they’re present.

“We hope we never have to use it,” he said. “But if we do, I’m more than confident that we’re ready.”



Cpl. Andrew Kalwitz

Sailors at the Health Service Support Element treat a patient during a mass casualty exercise. The exercises occur twice a week, but this was the first conducted with the Forward Resuscitative Surgical Suite from Al Taqaddum. The eight Sailors from the FRSS are to provide surgical capabilities here for the duration of the increased operational tempo of 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment.